Central West LHIN

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From the desk of Mimi Lowi-Young, CEO

Investing in the whole health system

Reducing the time people wait in hospital emergency rooms (ER) is a priority across Ontario. The hospital is where you should go in an emergency. But often people go to the hospital's ER because they have nowhere else to go when they need to see a doctor. Having adequate services in the community makes it much less likely that the local emergency room will become your health-care destination for non-emergency needs.

Community-based initiatives

Hospital improvements need to be supported by community services. The Central West LHIN has undertaken many initiatives to ensure that the right community services are in place. Recently the LHIN announced $3.9 million in new funding for seniors through Aging at Home, which brings total funding for those programs to $10.7 million for this year.

These programs are based on partnerships with community-based organizations. Gord Gunning, the CEO of CANES Community Care, writes, "The success of our new and expanded programs in the Central West LHIN … would not have been possible without the valuable input and guidance from your Board, your office and that of your senior management team."

Programs at CANES, such as Home at Last, Seniors Ride Connect, Treat at Home, Supportive Housing, Home Maintenance and Community Homemaking provide seniors with in-home support and opportunities to get out in the community for health appointments or social and health-education opportunities. Helping seniors remain safely in their homes with the right mix of health-care services is critical to building a health system that supports everyone.

Access to primary care is also important for everyone. The Central West LHIN is improving access to primary-care services in the community. Opening of the Malton satellite of the Bramalea Community Health Centre is imminent. The Rexdale Community Health Centre is in the process of establishing two new satellites in Jamestown and the Albion/Kipling communities. Two family

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Ontario
Central West Local Health Integration Network

What is the mandate of the Health System?

The following mandates for the broader health system, community-based health services, and acute care services were established:

Mandate of the Health System

A strong foundation of integrated community-based health services which is fully supported by an acute care system.

The health service providers collectively deliver consistent, high-quality services at the most effective location for the citizens of the LHIN.

Mandate of Community-based Health Services

Community-based health services are the first point of contact for residents of the Central West LHIN.

The goal is to provide more services which support health and well-being closer to where people live.

Mandate of Acute Care Health Services

A fully integrated hospital system, which provides a comprehensive range of services to meet the needs of LHIN residents and support the community-based service providers.

health teams were recently approved for the Central West LHIN, bringing the total to seven. The Central West LHIN is developing implementation plans for Health and Care Centres in Bolton and Shelburne, based on input from local residents, health providers and municipal leaders. The Health and Care Centre is a new model to support access to health-care services by connecting exiting health-care providers and addressing service gaps.

Hospital-based initiatives

The whole health system has to be working well to reduce ER wait times. Today, a real difference is being made. Wait times in the ER at local hospitals have been improving in spite of the fact that the Central West LHIN has the province's fastest-growing population and is experiencing increasing ER visits.

ER wait times are also linked to the number of Alternative Level of Care (ALC) patients in the hospital. ALC patients are those remaining in hospital because the health care they need in the community is not there for them. When hospital beds are taken up by people who could be cared for in another setting, ER wait times get longer as people wait to be admitted to hospital from the emergency room. In the Central West LHIN, the rate of ALC patients is among the lowest in the province.

To reduce the amount of time individuals wait in the ER, the Central West LHIN invested over $11 million in 2009/10 in 33 hospital-based initiatives, such as the implementation of a cardiac assessment zone and the pediatric assessment zone at Brampton Civic Hospital. The former assesses patients with chest pain, while the latter helps with the high volume of pediatric patients in our hospitals. William Osler Health System has also added geriatric emergency medicine (GEM) nurses who support seniors who come to the ER. The GEM nurse also works with community partners to support seniors returning to their homes.

At Headwaters Health Care Centre, a new Emergency Department Process Improvement Program is reviewing hospital processes and identifying opportunities for improvements in patient satisfaction, from the point of admission into the ER to the point of discharge.

These are major initiatives that the Central West LHIN is undertaking as it works with the whole health system to improve access to needed care and to ensure that residents are getting the best care possible, in the most appropriate setting.

Please feel free to share this information and don't hesitate to contact the Central West LHIN if you have any questions.